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## **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Post:** Sarajevo

### **EU Report Finds BiH Makes Limited Progress in Agriculture**

**Report Categories:**

Agricultural Situation

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**Report Highlights:**

The European Commission's 2012 Progress Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) underlines insufficient progress in preparation for use of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD) and emphasizes poor implementation of the State-level agricultural and rural development strategy. Food safety responsibility remains fragmented at both the State and Entity level and the capacity to implement official controls is weak. There are still overlapping areas between the veterinary and food safety legislation and the lack of progress in the food safety area has had a negative impact on trade in agricultural products, particularly with the EU. Some progress has been made in the phytosanitary sector with improved border control checks and in the area of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) as the result of adopting implementing legislation on product registration, risk assessment and conditions for placing GMO products on the market.

### **General Information:**

The European Commission published its Progress Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) on October 10, 2012. The EU's summary assessment is that insufficient progress has been made in 2012 in the areas of agriculture and rural development policy, food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy and fisheries. A comprehensive national agricultural and rural development strategy remains to be implemented throughout the whole country. The national capacity for coordination and harmonization also should be strengthened and legislation further aligned with the *Acquis*. Implementation of the food safety *Acquis* and BiH's official control capacity needs to be stepped up and establishments need to be upgraded at an accelerated pace.

Regarding **agriculture and rural development policy**, the country has not yet adopted a country-wide rural development strategy. Little progress was made with the preparations for the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD). Analyses were prepared for five sectors and the Office for Payment Harmonization was established but is understaffed to carry out its tasks. The Entities' budgets for agriculture and rural development remain low and subsidies to farmers are mainly product-based and not aligned with the *Acquis*. Also, BiH did not adopt the agricultural information strategy or the Law on the Agricultural Census. Agricultural statistics and the agricultural information system have yet to be improved. Land registration systems are not harmonized and land management requires strengthening.

Regarding **food safety**, BiH also demonstrated little progress in adopting the implementing legislation on residues of pesticides and radioactive contamination and product specific standards. Responsibilities for food safety remain fragmented at the State and Entity level and a strategy is still missing for using laboratory capacity to cover analysis of samples in line with the official controls on food and feed.

Regarding the **veterinary sector**, the EU found there is still much to be done. Veterinary legislation remains to be aligned with the *Acquis* on hygiene and food supervision. The powers of the State Veterinary Office are not sufficient to act as the central competent authority and the overlaps between the veterinary and food safety legislation remain. National laboratories have not yet obtained accreditation and they need to establish effective quality control systems. Inspectors and food business operators need to be trained on the EU requirements on hygiene. This lack of progress in the veterinary sector is already having a negative impact on trade in animals and animal products with the EU.

Regarding the **phytosanitary sector**, some progress was made. Phytosanitary checks at all border crossings improved thanks to the introduction of uniform lists of plants, plant products and other objects which must be subject to a plant health inspection. The program for monitoring potato diseases is being implemented. The phytosanitary legislation remains to be harmonized with the *Acquis* and reference laboratories for residue monitoring need to be designated.

Regarding **genetically modified organisms (GMOs)**, there was progress in adopting the implementing legislation for registration, risk assessment and the conditions for placing GMO products on the market. Training of laboratory and inspection staff on control methods has started. Entity legislation remains to be harmonized with the State-level legislation.

Regarding **fisheries**, little progress was made despite the potential for a considerable increase in exports of fish and fishery products to the EU. There is no national legislation which is aligned with the *Acquis* yet, and responsibilities for the fisheries sector remain fragmented.